

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, November 16, 2012**

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Action Item Calendar

Today: (November 16): [PARCC Readiness](#) Survey
Today (November 16): Notify principals re [SurveyWorks](#)
December 7: [Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement](#) form due

Notes from Acting Commissioner Abbott

1. Commissioner Gist scheduled to return to RIDE on November 26

As you may be aware, the Board of Regents has approved Commissioner Gist's return from medical leave, and the Commissioner intends to resume her work full time at RIDE as of November 26. Over the past few weeks, as the Commissioner has continued her recovery from surgery she has been meeting regularly with staff members and engaging in other RIDE work on a part-time basis from her home. She is very much looking forward to returning to RIDE, and I know that she will reach out to you once she is back at work full time.

I know that Commissioner Gist is proud that, during her absence, we have continued moving forward with our work toward transforming education in Rhode Island, including the full implementation of the Common Core, the recognition of

distinguished educators from across the state, the administration of the Race to the Top and the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grants, the launch of the Leadership Academy and of the Educator Performance and Support System, the implementation of our new Accountability System, our continued transition to the Common Core and the PARCC assessments, the development of a Fiscal Year 2014 budget proposal, and other ongoing initiatives. Many issues lie before us in the coming year, and I know that Commissioner Gist is ready to meet these challenges and to ensure that Rhode Island continues to lead the way when it comes to excellence in public education.

2. Four districts placed on AP Honor Roll

We received word last week from the College Board that four Rhode Island districts have earned a place on the 2012 AP Honor Roll for expanding access to AP coursework and exams and for improving performance on the AP exams. Congratulations to Barrington, Narragansett, South Kingstown, and Westerly for achieving this distinction! As we work together to provide opportunities for all students to take rigorous courses that will prepare them for success in college, it is very important that we hold high expectations for our teachers and students and that we ensure that all students have access to challenging coursework. In addition to the four districts that the AP has recognized this year, we are pleased that AP participation has been increasing steadily across Rhode Island over the past five years, with a particularly strong increase in participation among Hispanic students (up 13.2 percent from the 2010-11). Last year, nearly 3,500 Rhode Island high-school students took at least one AP exam, and all but six of our high schools had at least some students take AP exams. Let's continue our

commitment to rigorous and challenging coursework and add more districts to the honor roll in coming years.

From RIDE

Data Systems:

3. RIDE suspends Teacher Assistant Web Reporting System; new system to open next school year

Effective **today** (November 16), the RIDE Teacher Assistant (TA) Web Reporting System will be suspended. LEAs will not be required to submit any TA Reports (including Assignment Report, Fund Report, FTE Report, Exception Report, Qualification Summary, PD Interest, PD Achieved, and Submission Status) to RIDE to verify teacher-assistant placement.

Each year, we have collected teacher-assistant data through the RICERT System. In the Fall of 2013, we will collect the TA data through the new Personnel Data Collection (PDC) System. More information about the PDC System will be communicated to LEAs in the spring.

If you have additional questions about these changes, contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov.

Training and Webinars:

4. RIDE to hold training on Instructional Management System

Our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum will host a training session on the Instructional Management System (IMS) for System Administrators in LEAs that are

implementing the IMS now or in the near future. As a reminder, the IMS training will include admin training on *both* Pinnacle Instruction and EXCEED RTI. The session will be held on Monday, **December 17**, from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. at URI Providence, 80 Washington/255 Westminster St.

Please register for this session through eRIDE. Participants will not need a laptop or tablet.

5. RIDE to hold session on Career-Technical education

Our Office of Multiple Pathways will hold a technical-assistance session to share information about Career-Technical Education (CTE) regulations, guidance, funding, and the upcoming program-evaluation process. The session will be held **December 10**, from 8 – 10:30 a.m., at the New England Institute of Technology East Greenwich campus.

This session is for *all* superintendents, CTE directors, high-school principals, guidance directors, and school-based coordinators. Registration is open now through November 28, at:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/WorkshopReg/viewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=634>.

Reminder: You can either use an existing eRIDE user account to login or you can create a workshop-registration account by going [here](#).

There will be scheduled time for Q&A, so please bring your questions. You can access the CTE regulations and guidance documents through the registration site.

Technology

6. RIDE seeking information from LEAs on building, classroom wireless access, developing vendor list

Work on the Wireless Classroom Initiative continues. The first Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Project Manager to oversee implementation statewide has been posted at on the State Purchasing website. You can access the RFP at:

<https://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RVIP/StateAgencyBids/7458227.pdf>.

This RFP will close on Wednesday (November 21). Proposals will be evaluated by a review team, which includes the members of the Wireless Bond Advisory Group.

Within the next week we will post a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that will ultimately establish a statewide list of qualified vendors LEAs will access to fulfill the work under this initiative. Once LEAs have their certified site survey(s) completed by the vendor(s) and submitted to RIDE, the results will be reviewed and, once the surveys are approved by RIDE and the Project Manager, distribution of grants will begin to pay for the associated costs. Only costs relating to wireless infrastructure will be reimbursable. Here is a tentative schedule for this work:

January 2013	Master Price Agreement established
September 2013	Last day for LEAs to contact vendors and schedule survey – Vendors must complete all site-survey work within 30

	days of the start of the survey
January 2014	All site surveys must be completed
January 2015	All site work must be completed

Please note: We will provide information at a later date concerning a separate process for those LEAs that currently have wireless classrooms for infrastructure upgrades related to their networks.

We also held a meeting with representatives from LEAs with schools designed as Priority 2 by USAC - that is, those schools whose free and reduced-price lunch rate is 80 percent or higher. Discussion centered on the best ways to maximize the matching federal funds available through the School and Library Division of USAC.

On Monday (November 19), we will distribute a document that has been pre-populated with the building and classroom information collected from LEAs last year when a request was made of the General Assembly for this bond. You will be asked to review and update the information. In addition, there are a few questions that were added to build a list of vendors commonly used for this type of work in LEAs to ensure that you receive notification of the posting of the RFP for services once we issue the RFP. The information we are requesting is critical to ensure that vendors have a complete, overall picture of the work available statewide when they submit their initial proposals to us. Please make every effort to ensure that the response from your LEA is complete and that you return it to us in a timely manner.

We will continue to update you on the status of this project as it progresses through each stage. If you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Cindy Brown, at 222-4257 or at Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov.

From other state agencies

7. Newport, Washington County residents can register for federal assistance

The Emergency Management Agency has asked us to disseminate this information:

The R.I. Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) announces that Rhode Islanders who live in Newport or Washington Counties and sustained damages or losses from Hurricane Sandy can now register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine eligibility for assistance.

There are three ways to register with FEMA:

- visit DisasterAssistance.gov;
- use a smartphone at m.fema.gov; or
- call (800) 621-3362. (TTY: (800) 462-7585).

Anyone who is registering should have the following information ready and available:

- current and pre-disaster address;
- current phone number;
- Social Security number (FEMA does verify name and Social Security number.);

- insurance information (agency name, policy number, actual policy if possible);
- total household annual income;
- description of losses caused by Hurricane Sandy; and
- bank account and routing number (for direct deposit of assistance funds).

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>